SPECIAL EXHIBITION PROJECTS OUTLINED BY THE
DIVISION OF NATURAL SCIENCES

The projects are listed in the order of their complexity, starting with the simplest and least costly.

PROJECT 1.

THE VAMPIRE BAT.

A small exhibit could be assembled and installed with material now on hand, which would bring to the public the true story of the Vampire, which does actually exist.

We have mounted specimens, as well as photos of the animal at work. The exhibit would show the technique used by the Vampire, and demonstrate under high magnification the specialized dentition.

This exhibit would require a small amount of assistance from Henry Wylde's department. Very little floor space would be needed. Expense, in materials and labor, would be minimal.

PROJECT 2.

THE DEADLY TRIANGLE.

An educational disease-prevention exhibit can be assembled illustrating the triple association of germ - insect - animal such as occurs in plague, endemic typhus, Chagas disease, encephalitis, rabbit myxoma, chicken pox, malaria, etc.

Cooperation could be arranged with the County Health Department, sanitary engineers and veterinarians.

The exhibit would include the actual insects and animal hosts, with charts, photographs, diagrams and possibly some models. It would take considerable time to assemble, would require aid and materials of the Exhibition Department, particularly artists to prepare charts and models. Considerable label printing would be involved. Some help would be necessary from the general labor force. Floor space involved would be about the equivalent of the old rotunda.

PROJECT 3.

POISONOUS REPTILES.

An exhibit dealing with the venomous reptiles of the southwestern United States. This could include actual specimens, casts, and enlarged models of the fangs and poison sacs, together with demonstrations of first aid methods of treatment, processes of manufacture of antivennin, etc. Enlarged photographs, distribution charts, and a considerable number of printed labels would be needed. Very little general labor would be required to assemble and install this exhibit, but materials for charts and models, and preparators time would be considerable. Floor space required would approximate that for Project 2.

PROJECT 4.

EDIBLE, DESTRUCTIVE AND POISONOUS FUNGI.

An exhibit, timed to correlate with the local mushroom season, which would show by means of charts, models, and specimens, the more common edible fungi of this area, the poisonous varieties, and possibly also the commercial varieties and methods of propagation.

With this could also be demonstrated the types of fungi which destroy wood and other building materials.

Cooperation could be secured from the mycological societies, the commercial growers, and such industries as are concerned in wood preservation.

We have a considerable number of casts of local mushrooms, but would need several models, charts, diagrams, and specimens showing damage to structural materials. Many labels would be required.

The time element, rather than cost, would be the principal factor in this exhibit. A hall of medium size would have to be made available.

PROJECT 5.

FOOD AND GAME FISHES.

An exhibit illustrating the important food and game fishes of the Pacific Coast, their distribution, habits, methods of capture and industrial processes in connection with their marketing.

This exhibit could be run in cooperation with the sportsman's organizations, the fishing industry, tackle manufacturers, etc.

It should be composed of mounted specimens, models, photos, charts, manufacturers installations, equipment, etc.

An exhibit of this type would involve several months of planning and preparation, a considerable amount of labor in installation, substantial amounts of materials (the costs of which might be largely furnished by the commercial interests), and a lot of time and effort on the part of our Exhibition Department. A large hall would have to be set aside in advance, and definitely pledged for the purpose before negotiations were opened with the commercial organizations.

PROJECT 6.

SPORTSMAN'S SHOW (HUNTING)

An exhibit to be prepared with mounted specimens and accessories, charts and photographs, and timed to coincide with the opening of the winter duck, quail, and pigeon hunting season. Instructive mounts could be shown which would aid the hunter in identifying his game in the field before he shoots, thus preventing the killing of many protected species. Emphasis could be placed on the need for special breeding preserves so as to insure a continuing supply of game.

Cooperation could be obtained from the Calif. Division of Fish and Game, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Incorporated, and various conservation groups.

This exhibition could appropriately be held in one of our American Mammal habitat group halls. It would require some time to organize, and considerable help from the Department of Exhibitions, and the labor force.

PROJECT 7.

VALUABLE INSECT PRODUCTS.

A special exhibit illustrating the products of certain insects which are useful to man, such as silk, honey, wax, certain dyes, shellac, etc., and also showing the methods of gathering, processing, and marketing these products. Models, graphs, enlarged photographs, and explanatory panels would be necessary for this type of exhibit. Cooperation could be secured from the apiarists, equipment manufacturers, and probably from silk distributing organizations.

The exhibit might be expanded to include the use of insects by man along the following lines: (a) As fertilizing or fructifying aids in agriculture; (b) as aids in the treatment of certain diseases; (c) as agents in the destruction of waste materials.

To do this exhibit effectively would require considerable time.

Insects are too small for display unless they are enlarged by some method of magnification. The Exhibition Department would have to be depended upon for models and panels. The photographer's time and materials would be an important item. A medium sized gallery would suffice to house the exhibit, and a considerable portion of the displays would be suitable for permanent exhibition in the Entomological Hall.

PROJECT 8.

TROPICAL AQUARIUM FISHES.

There are in southern California several societies and hundreds of persons devoted to raising tropical fish in aquaria. A special exhibition devoted to this interest would bring enthusiastic crowds to the Museum. We held a very modest show of this type some years ago, with reasonable success.

To do this exhibit correctly would involve considerable cash outlay. Batteries of aquaria in uniform sizes would have to be installed, and it is doubtful if the participating organizations would pay for them.

Considerable labor is involved in caring for such an exhibit. Uniform labels would have to be furnished, and special lighting would probably be required. The second floor habitat hall might well be used for such an exhibit.

PROJECT 9.

CALIFORNIA WILD FLOWER SHOW.

In years gone by our wild flower shows received very generous press support and produced some of the best attendance records we have had.

To do a show of this kind requires a great amount of work, and at present would call for considerable cash outly for containers and stands. It would also draw heavily on our labor force and our print shop. In spite of these drawbacks, it would produce worth while results in stimulating public interest and attendance.

The botanical societies and garden clubs can be tied in with this type of exhibition, and would supply some voluntary help. It is doubtful however if they would shoulder any of the expense.

Our principal difficulty is in the matter of labor and space. A flower show needs plenty of room and good light. The plants and cut flowers require daily attention and expert care.

In connection with flower displays it is well to remember that cultivated flowers have special appeal to Californians, and it would be possible to hold specialized shows nearly every month, each devoted to a different flower and appealing to a different group of enthusiasts.

A suggested schedule would be:

March - Camellias.
March and April - Azaleas.
April - Iris.
April and May, Cymbidiums.
May & June - Cattleyas and Roses.
June - Gladioli.
June and July - Asters.
July and August - Begonias.
August and September - Dahlias.
October to December - Chrysanthemums.

Each of these flowers has a large and enthusiastic group devoted to its cultivation. Some have special societies, and publications.

There are therefore ten potential projects for special exhibitions in the above list. It is useless to list them however, since there is no exhibition space now available for a show of this type.

PROJECT 10.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN SCIENCE.

An exhibit designed to show what goes on and why in our respective departments. It would demonstrate by materials, photographs, charts, models, instruments and tools the techniques used in the field and laboratory; the building of and reason for reserve collections, and the methods of study. It would serve to show the application of the results of research as applied to the practical problems of life.

The preparation of this exhibit would draw heavily on the photographic department, and also on the artists and technicians of the Exhibition Department. Considerable space and special lighting facilities would be required. Preliminary study and planning on the part of all the curators would be necessary.

SMALL REFURBISHING OR REARRANGING EXHIBITS

Plans have been tentatively dreawn up for a number of small exhibition features which are largely concerned with rearrangement of certain elements in our present displays, or additions of certain units to standing exhibits. A few are noted as follows:

1. STRANGE OR UNUSUAL FISHES.

This would include (a) blind cave fishes; (b) poisonous or venomous fishes; (c) fishes with electric organs; (d) air-breathing fishes; (e) luminescent fishes; and (f) parasitic fishes.

These would be added as a special unit to our present marine life exhibit. Specimens are now on hand.

2. PACIFIC BIG GAME FISHES.

Mounted fish of several species are already prepared to go in the empty cases in the marine section just as soon as labor, labels and a few inexpensive supplies are available.

3. INTRODUCED BIRDS IN THE U. S.

A small exhibit can be prepared which would show the effects, both harmful and beneficial, which the introduced birds (such as starlings, English sparrows, spotted doves, etc.) have had upon our indigenous bird life, agriculture and national economy.

This would be timely, as Mr. Stager now has on his desk the first starling to reach southern California.

The outline of suggested special exhibits here submitted in no way exhausts the possibilities for developing natural history features for the Museum. We have a considerable list of items in reserve.

Our Curators and their assistants stand ready to go ahead with the execution of any or all of these projects just as soon as exhibition space can definitely be assigned, and materials and labor provided in amounts sufficient to insure their success.

Respectfully submitted.

John A. Comstock

Los Angeles, Calif.
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